

Explore It

FOR LEADERS



INFLUENCE

Daniel 2 Nebuchadnezzar's dream

It seems unbelievable that God would use a young man like Daniel to speak out in a place of exile and oppression. It seems even more unlikely that King Nebuchadnezzar would not only listen to Daniel's opinion but also intentionally seek out his assistance. In this chapter we see Daniel's influence increasing. This is not because he is wise in the world's eyes, but because his trust is firmly fixed in the God of Heaven and earth.

In this session we think about the influence that our children can have, both within their school and within their corps. It may be that they can encourage others to speak out who might not have a voice and have been marginalised. We look at how children can have an active part to play in their corps/church – perhaps by setting up a children's advisory group. Let the children come up with ideas as to how they can have an influence, and encourage those who currently might not have a voice.

You will need:

→ Hang a large white sheet and place a bright lamp behind it (optional) – see Start It section

Start It

Choose one of the activities to start your session.

Option One – funniest dream

Talk about a funny dream you've had, then ask the children to share their stories.

Option Two – mime

Ask the children to take turns going behind the sheet and mime a dream they've had, casting a shadow on the sheet from the lamp.

Option Three – Storytelling

Sit in a circle and start a story: 'In my dream there was ...' The next person remembers the line and builds on the story. Adapt the game to suit your group, eg listing objects/animals/characters, perhaps linked to the alphabet. Or they each say a complete (and silly) sentence, making a story. Finish the game with everyone saying, 'And then I woke up!'

● **Say:** Today's story started with a dream. This dream was very strange, and King Nebuchadnezzar couldn't work out what it meant.

Sing It

● **Say:** Daniel was full of courage because he knew God was with him no matter what was happening in his life. Today's song talks about how we can be brave and face anything with God's strength and love.

'Motions (brave)' by Saddleback Kids (3 mins 31 secs)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLAVCv_onTw

Tell It

🗨️ **Say:** Last week we were introduced to Daniel, a Bible character from the Old Testament.

Ask: Share three things that you discovered about Daniel last week.

This discussion should give you an opportunity to recap Daniel's story and how he ended up in Babylon.

🗨️ **Say:** In our story today, Daniel had been serving in the royal palace for a while and King Nebuchadnezzar was on the throne. The king had a dream that he didn't understand, and it caused chaos in the court. Watch the clip to find out more about the story.

Video

Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's dream by Saddleback Kids (3 mins 7 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psRWgA60Au0>

🗨️ **Say:** King Nebuchadnezzar had a terrible dream and called his wise men to interpret it for him.

Ask:

- ➔ What unreasonable thing did he ask them to do?
- ➔ Why do you think he refused to tell them what the dream was?
- ➔ How did the king react when the wise men said that what he was asking was impossible?
- ➔ What decree did the king make that impacted all the wise men in Babylon, including Daniel and his friends?
- ➔ Do you think this was a fair thing to do? If not, why not?
- ➔ How was the king using his power and influence at this point?

Read Daniel 2:15-17 (ICB).

'Daniel asked, "Why did the king order such a terrible punishment?" Then Arioch explained everything to Daniel. When Daniel heard the story, he went to King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel asked him to give him some more time. Then he would tell the king what he had dreamed and what it meant.'

'So Daniel went to his house. He explained the whole story to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Daniel asked his friends to pray to the God of Heaven. Daniel asked them to pray that God would show them mercy and help them understand this secret. Then Daniel and his friends would not be put to death with the other wise men of Babylon.'

🗨️ **Say:** If Daniel and his friends couldn't solve the riddle of the king's dream, then they were going to be killed. Daniel could have easily started to try and work out what the dream meant, but he knew he couldn't do anything without God's help.

Ask: What did Daniel do as soon as he found out there was a problem?

🗨️ **Say:** When God revealed what the dream meant, Daniel sang a song of praise to say thank you. He went to the king and explained the meaning of the dream.

Read Daniel 2:47-49 (ICB).

'Then the king said to Daniel, "Truly I know your God is the greatest of all gods. And he is the Lord of all the kings. He tells people about things they cannot know. I know this is true. You were able to tell these secret things to me.'

'Then the king gave Daniel an important position in his kingdom. And he gave many gifts to Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar made him ruler over the whole area of Babylon. And he put Daniel in charge of all the wise men of Babylon. Daniel asked the king to make Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego important leaders over the area of Babylon. And the king did as Daniel asked. Daniel himself became one of the important people who stayed at the royal court.'

Ask: How did the king react when Daniel revealed the meaning of the dream?

🗨️ **Say:** Daniel started life at court as a young man learning a new language, new customs and getting used to a new name. As he continued to rely on God, he was able to influence more and more people within the royal court, eventually becoming an adviser to the king.

Action It

● **Say:** Lots of adverts on the television feature celebrities to help sell products.

Ask:

- Can you name some adverts with famous people in them?
- Why do you think companies pay celebrities lots of money to be in their adverts?

● **Say:** On social media there are lots of people who spend all of their time showing products we might like to buy, or places we might want to visit. They are often called 'influencers'.

Ask: What does it mean when we 'influence' someone?

● **Say:** When we influence someone our words and actions help them to think differently or act differently. When Daniel spoke to the king, his words and actions made a difference to the way the king behaved. Instead of killing all the wise men of Babylon, the king acknowledged Daniel's God and promoted him and his friends in the royal court.

Ask: What was the very first thing that Daniel did before he spoke to the king?

● **Say:** There are lots of people in your life that you have an influence over, perhaps at school, at home or in clubs.

Discuss

Ask the children to talk to the person next to them.

- Can you think of anyone you have influence over?
- Who are they and what kind of influence do you have?
- How can you be a positive influence over someone?
- Where would you like to have more influence over the decisions that are made? At church? At school? In your family?

Repeat the last two questions, for the children to share their thoughts with the group.

● **Say:** King Nebuchadnezzar used his power to influence people through fear. Daniel showed us a different way, God's way.

Be an influencer

As a group, choose an area of the children's lives where they would like to have more influence, eg at their corps/church. Give the children the opportunity to think of ways that they could speak out for those who have been marginalised and how they could have a more active role in decisions made at the corps/church. Let the children come up with ideas as to how they can have an influence, and also encourage those who currently might not have a voice.

Depending on your situation there may be an opportunity for the children to meet with the leadership team or set up a children's advisory group.

Pray It

Ask: What was the first thing that Daniel did when he was faced with the puzzle of Nebuchadnezzar's dream?

● **Say:** Daniel wanted to be a positive influence on the king and went straight to God to ask for help. Think of all the things you have discussed in the Action It section today and spend time asking for God's guidance and wisdom as you try to be a positive influence on others.

Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It (For Me) and Explore It (Together) ideas for children and families.